

Obama's Policy toward Iran and Its Nuclear Program

Abstract

The problem of Iranian nuclear program became one of the most challenging and important issues in Obama's foreign policy. No other problem in U.S. foreign policy of recent years (even Afghanistan) is equally difficult to resolve and is so crucial to the prosperity of the world. The need to halt Tehran from obtaining a nuclear bomb became urgent. The author answers in the article why this matter is so relevant for keeping peace in the Middle East and what three main options Obama has with regard to Iranian nuclear program. The author points that at the beginning of his presidency Obama and his aides hoped that this problem would be solved by the change of regime. As an attempt to oust the current regime in Iran in June 2009 failed, this hopes turned out to be futile. After that Obama had to change his strategy toward Iran. The author argues that after the June 2009 the rhetoric of Obama and his administration became harsher. Currently, the contingency of military action against Iran is again on the table. Moreover, more and more factors supports that this option of resolving the problem will be sooner or later employed in reality.

The Obama administration seems to have very similar, if not completely identical, objectives as for Iran to those of the former administration. President Obama clearly said in one of his numerous TV interviews that "Iran is going to be one of our biggest challenges."¹ The majority of U.S. policy-makers appears to agree on that matter as well. The most salient of Obama's purposes regarding Iranian issue is preventing Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. This is definitely not going to be an easy task, as every U.S. gesture and action towards Iran must be carefully planned. What distinguishes President Obama from the previous administration is a conviction as to way in which the U.S. could best achieve its goals vis-a-vis Iran. Obama proposed diplomatic negotiations instead of unnecessary and counterproductive belligerent rhetoric. Obama wanted to shape the Iran's behavior in such a way that a resort to use direct military force would become unnecessary. Obama and his aides counted on

¹ Daniel Gouré, Rebecca Grant, "U.S. Naval options for influencing Iran," *Naval War College Review* 62, no. 4 (Autumn 2009): 17.

a change at the top of Iranian authorities. However, last developments show that, as it was expressed by the former chief of the CIA Michael Hayden, a U.S. military strike on Iran “seems inexorable.”²

In general, we can distinguish two stages or phases in Obama’s policy toward Iran: the first half of 2009 was characterized by relatively mild rhetoric of Washington towards Iran. In this phase Tehran was more encouraged than forced to concessions. Obama tried to convince Tehran to undertake direct talks. This approach to Iran changed after controversial elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran in June 2009, when the ruling regime clamped down on dissidents after probably faking the results of presidential elections.³ Since then, Obama’s rhetoric became sounding similar to the one of George W. Bush. Some claim that the events of June 2009 simply dispelled Obama’s illusions of the real face of Iranian government. Others argue that Obama never had any illusions toward the Iranian regime. According to them, Obama’s tacit strategy to overthrow the current Iranian government simply failed and he had to devise a new strategy.⁴ Nonetheless, since June 2009 the stance of Obama’s administration in relation to Iran became notably harsher and more resolute.

We cannot fully understand Obama’s policy toward Iran if we do not realize the aims of at least Israel – a power that has its own interests in this respect. For Israelis, Iran possessing nuclear weapon and under rules of Mahmud Ahmadinejad is a threat to the survival of the state and the nation. It is the biggest danger since the rise of contemporary Israel in 1948. This conviction is widespread among Jewish citizens living in Israel these days. The prevailing majority of Jewish inhabitants is deeply convinced that Iran would try to destroy Israel if only it would have appropriate means for achieving this purpose. Unfortunately, extremely belligerent and irresponsible rhetoric of Mahmud Ahmadinejad makes Israelis only more confirmed in this conviction. We all need to bear in mind that Israelis, both as a society and as a nation, are heavily influenced by

² “Ex-CIA chief Hayden: Military action against Iran ‘seems inexorable,’” July 25, 2010, <http://www.debka.com/article/8929> (accessed July 27, 2010).

³ However there is common consensus in the West to present the results of the last presidential election in Iran as faked, some people find this assertions questionable. See for example: K. Ballen and P. Doherty, “The Iranian people speak,” *The Washington Post*, June 15, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/14/AR2009061401757.html> (accessed July 30, 2010).

⁴ There is much evidence pointing that the United States and the United Kingdom firmly, however tacitly, supported Iranian opposition and tried to replace the current regime in Iran with a new one, more friendly toward the West. This policy was conducted during Bush’s presidency as well as the first months of Obama’s presidency. These facts should be borne in mind while considering demonstrations in Iran in summer 2009. See for example: Guy Dinmore, “US and UK develop democracy for Iran,” *The Financial Times*, April 21, 2006, <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/4546fed8-d158-11da-a38b-0000779e2340.html>, (accessed May 25, 2010); Howard LaFranchi, “A bid to foment democracy in Iran,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 17, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0217/p03s03-usfp.html> (accessed May 25, 2010); Tim Shipman, “Bush sanctions ‘black ops’ against Iran,” *The Telegraph*, May 27, 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1552784/Bush-sanctions-black-ops-against-Iran.html> (accessed May 25, 2010); Seymour M. Hersh, “Preparing the Battlefield,” *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2008, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/07/080707fa_fact_hersh (accessed May 25, 2010).

the traumatic experience of Holocaust. This giant evil is deeply imprinted on soul of every Jew in Israel. One of the lessons that Israelis learnt from Holocaust is that they actually cannot rely on anybody. The world generally did not help Jews during the dark years of Holocaust. Israeli are determined not to let something similar happen again.

But the current Israeli government is one of the most hawkish in its history. Avigdor Lieberman – the leader of the party Israel Beitenu and the minister for foreign affairs – is often described as an right-wing extremist. The Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu is a hard-liner on Iran. Obama is well aware of it. He is hard pressed hard by Israel to treat the issue of Iran very seriously. Basically, Tel Aviv is sending a message to Washington: “Do something to halt Iranian nuclear program, because if you do not or you fail, we will not hesitate to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities and you know well what disastrous impact it would have on a global economy.” But time goes on, and year by year, month by month, week by week and day by day Iran is closer to reaching nuclear capability. Obama knows that he is also under pressure of time. There is no much time left. Iran is on the verge of producing its first nuclear bomb. It seems that it is a question of one or two years.⁵ This year and the next year will be crucial. Either the international community will stop Tehran or Israeli will try to do it on their own. And this matter is so important, so paramount to Israel that Tel Aviv will not hesitate to attack Iran even if such an action entails dramatic worsening of its relations with the U.S. Obama presumably does not want such a scenario take place at some point in the future. A big war in the Middle East is the last thing that American economy needs nowadays in the period of financial crisis.

Basically, in its policy toward Iran, Obama's administration has three main options:

- it can seek some sort of agreement with Iran, a détente, or, to put it another way, a rapprochement in relations with Iran. The U.S. may try to turn the Islamic Republic of Iran from its adversary to its ally. It, of course, would need very serious concessions from Washington. In this case the White House had to recognize the dominant position of Iran in the Persian Gulf, its rights to possess nuclear weapon and the undemocratic political system in Iran. American sanctions against Iran would have to be lifted. In return for concessions mentioned above Iran would have to assure the U.S. that it is not going to destabilize Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, Iran would have to promise that it will not take any aggressive actions toward American allies in the region, mainly Arab countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council, perhaps Israel as well. This course of events is not likely due to many reasons, nevertheless two of them are especially relevant:
- such scenario would be absolutely unacceptable for Israel. And one should realize that so-called pro-Israeli lobby is very influential in the USA. Not so far ago, on 18th May 2010 precisely, a group of American congressmen of Jewish descent met with President Obama. 9 senators and 28 representatives resolutely demanded

⁵ Leon Panetta, Interview with Jake Tapper, June 27, 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/week-transcript-panetta/story?id=11025299&page=3> (accessed July 30, 2010).

more pro-Israeli politics on the part of Obama. They expressed their concern that Obama's policy is unfavorable for Israel and it is harmful for bilateral relations. These Congressmen advised Obama to pay a visit to Israel as soon as he can. What's more, he should also publicly support Israel on its stance toward Palestine and Iran.

- Tehran is extremely distrustful of Washington. Iranian authorities do not believe in good will and good intentions on the part of the U.S. Actually, not only Iranian political elites, but also a predominant majority of Iranians are very suspicious of the U.S. and Israel. It is really hard to exaggerate the mistrust towards Washington in the Iran. As a matter of fact, it is the result of past experiences of Iranian nation. Ironically, the only one truly democratic leader of Iran – Mohammed Mossaddeq – who was chosen in unquestionably democratic elections – had been ousted in 1951, in the U.S.-sponsored and coordinated coup. And this act paved the way for brutal dictatorship of the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. When, after decades of repressions, Iranians finally overthrew the Shah and his regime, their happiness did not last long. Soon, Washington encouraged Saddam Hussein's Iraq to attack the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian-Iraqi war lasted 8 years and was one of the most bloody wars in the history of the Middle East. It was a typical war of attrition. At least 500.000 Iranians died, while both sides used chemical weapons during the warfare. The economies of Iraq and Iran were devastated. That is why it should not amaze anyone that Iranians generally do not express a lot of sympathy vis-a-vis the United States. Although in politics everything is possible, the scenario of Iranian-American rapprochement is not very probable.
- the second option is imposing sanctions. If sanctions are to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program, they must fulfill two preconditions: firstly, they should be crippling; secondly, they should be effective. The U.S. experiences with sanctions against Iran do not lean toward optimism. Since 1979 sanctions have been the central tool in the U.S. arsenal in relation to Iran. In 1979 Washington enacted first sanctions in response to the seizure of U.S. embassy by Iranians and holding 52 officials as hostages for more than a year. Washington imposed an embargo on trade with Iran and, additionally, froze Iranian assets in the USA. As it later turned out, almost every next American president imposed new sanctions on Iran. For instance, Bill Clinton cooperating with Congress in years 1995-96 forbade literally all economic interaction with Tehran. Furthermore, the U.S. government enacted penalties against any investor from third-country that dared to invest in Iranian energy sector. George W. Bush further restricted the sanctions, implementing new ones, concerning foreign banks cooperating with Iran.⁶ All that moves were painful and acute for Tehran. All that sanctions significantly contributed to isolating the Islamic Republic of Iran in the world. All that sanctions considerably increased the costs of doing business for Iranian enterprises, nevertheless Iran never gave up.

⁶ Suzanne Maloney, "Sanctioning Iran: If only it were so simple," *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (January 2010): 138–139.

Iranian authorities and citizens simply got used to living with various sanctions and embargos. So, one more or less, who cares. According to many experts the only one additional sanction that really could bring Iran to its knees is a complete ban on exporting gasoline to Iran. It may seem strange or even amazing, but Iran, that possesses one of the biggest deposits of oil all over the world, imports approximately 40% of gasoline that its economy consumes every year. This paradox is a result of a small production capacity of Iranian oil refineries, which has been underdeveloped for decades. In reality, Iran imports gasoline from the United Arab Emirates, that was processed from its own oil that Iran had exported to the UAE beforehand. Only punishing Tehran by cutting Iran off the gasoline would be sufficiently paralyzing or crippling sanction.

And so we smoothly moved to the second precondition: effectiveness of sanctions. Not going into details too much, we must realize that without Russia's support no new sanctions against Iran could be effectively implemented. Russia is practically the only one state that could thwart U.S. plans on imposing crippling sanctions on Iran. Russia has a possibility to provide Iran with gasoline by rail, if only such a necessity appears. Russian gasoline could be provided through territories of either Azerbaijan or post-Soviet states of Central Asia. Moscow's influences in these transit countries are so strong, that in practice, these countries cannot oppose to Russia's will. If the Kremlin wishes to ship gasoline to Iran, it will definitely manage to do so. And the politics of the Kremlin as regards Iranian nuclear issue is quite simple. The Kremlin is not going to cooperate with the White House on Iran until the latter concedes in matters vital for Moscow, that are mainly: giving up the plans of ballistic missile defense in Middle Europe, an acceptance for Ukraine coming back to Russia's backyard, a tacit consent on Russian aggression on Georgia or at least replacing Saakashvili's government with such that would be more friendly and submissive to Russia. Some people claim that Obama has yet quietly made a serious concessions to the Kremlin in order to gain its support for harsher approach to Iran. According to "New York Times", Obama has sent a secret letter to Russian president Dmitry Medvedev in which he proposed some kind of *quid pro quo* transaction. Obama reportedly did it on February 2009, that is just at the beginning of his presidency. Roger Baker, a journalist of "New York Times" who first raised this topic, claims that Obama promised not to deploy elements of anti ballistic missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic in return for Russia's help in halting Iranian nuclear program. The Medvedev's press secretary publicly announced that although Medvedev really received a letter from Barack Obama, in fact, it did not contain any "specific proposals."⁷ When I was reading about it, it came to my mind a famous sentence of prince Gorchakov: *I do not believe in any information until it is officially denied.*

⁷ Peter Baker, "Obama offered deal to Russia in secret letter," *New York Times*, March 2, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/03/washington/03prexy.html> (accessed May 26, 2010).

- the third option is a military action. On July 2009 Vice President Joe Biden said that the Obama administration would not stand in Israel's way if the latter decides to take military action to finally eliminate Iranian nuclear threat. Biden told one of ABC reporters that Israel has the right to determine its own course of action in regard to the Iranian nuclear threat, regardless of what the Obama administration chooses to do.⁸ "If the Netanyahu government decides to take a course of action different than the one being pursued now, that is their sovereign right to do so. That is not our choice." – explicitly said Biden. That sounded as if Washington had given a green light for attack on Iran to Tel Aviv. However, others interpreted this words as a warning vis-a-vis Iran. On September 2009, Obama said that he did not rule out the possibility of waging war against Iran.⁹ On December 2009, Admiral Mike Mullen announced that U.S. armed forces were prepared for a war with Iran if such a war would be inevitable.¹⁰

Above I mentioned just few statements of American officials pointing out at the danger of war with Iran. It is worth noting that this worrying rhetoric came after controversial elections in Iran in June 2009. The Obama administration might take a decision to assault Iran either unilaterally or in coordination and collaboration with Israel or the United Kingdom. Such a contingency could not be excluded in advance.

Obama seems to be reluctant to strike Iran, although some of the members of his administration are more inclined towards military operation against Tehran. Such a move would be extremely risky. The ramifications of an Israeli or American military campaign against Iran would be at least dire. Iran has a powerful retaliatory means that could thwart American military plans:

- first of all, Tehran can relatively easily block the Strait of Hormuz. This strait has a strategic significance for global economy that is really hard to be overrated. The Strait of Hormuz is a vital choke point in the shipping of crude oil from the Persian Gulf to the open sea. About 40% of the global seaborne oil trade and approximately 90% of the Persian Gulf's oil export go every day through this strategic strait. Blocking the strait would be tantamount to blocking the global economy. Not going to far into details, one should take it for granted that Iran has an impressively broad range of military options to block the Strait of Hormuz. In the long run, the U.S. Navy would certainly unblock the Strait of Hormuz, but it would take weeks or months before U.S. forces manage to do it. If the Strait was blocked, the prices of oil at global markets would immediately and radically increase. We must all bear in mind that dependence on oil is a real Achilles' heel of the U.S. If you want to harm

⁸ Biden, "U.S. won't stop Israeli strike on Iran," Haaretz, July 6, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/u-s-letting-israel-act-freely-on-iran-isn-t-policy-change-1.279382> (accessed May 26, 2010).

⁹ "Obama grozi Iranowi i nie wyklucza wojny," September 26, 2009, <http://www.tvn24.pl/-1,1621208,0,1,wiadomosc.html> (accessed May 26, 2010)

¹⁰ "USA gotowe na kolejną wojnę," December 22, 2009, http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/2100046,12,amerykanie_sa_gotowi_na_otwarcie_frontu_kolejnej_wojny,item.html (accessed May 26, 2010).

the U.S., probably the best way to do so is through provoking oil prices to rise up sharply in a short period of time. After September 2008, the American economy is especially vulnerable to various shocks.

- moreover, Tehran could destroy oil platforms, oil terminals and water desalination facilities of the Arab countries allied with the U.S. There is little doubt that Tehran can quickly wreak havoc on global economy when it recognizes that the war is unavoidable.
- Tehran can easily instigate an anti-American insurgency in Iraq and, to a lesser degree, in Afghanistan. Frankly speaking, in case of war with the U.S., we cannot even rule out the contingency of an overt Iranian attack on Iraq. Furthermore, Iranian authorities could also provoke Shi'a minorities in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain to rise up against their governments. Shi'a minorities in these countries are heavily influenced by Iran and feel discriminated and sometimes even persecuted by their governments.
- in the event of war, Tehran could attack Israel not only directly, but also through its proxies such as Hamas and Hizbollah. If Israel would be attacked by Hizbollah, Israel sooner or later invades Lebanon.
- Also Syria and Iran are in a close military, political and economic alliance.¹¹ If a war with Iran breaks out, it will be a high probability that at some point Syria would enter the war. Actually, Israel prepares for waging simultaneous wars with Hamas, Hizbollah, Syria and Iran.

In addition, an air military campaign against Iranian nuclear facilities does not guarantee success. Iranian nuclear facilities are scattered all over the country. Moreover, these facilities usually are secured very well – many are either drilled inside slopes of mountains or placed deeply underground. No one really knows how many secret military and nuclear installations Iran really possesses. Data and information given by intelligence agencies are not always reliable and credible. It must be emphasized that Iranian secret services are well known for their exceptional skills at disinformation.¹² Last but not least, destroying some of Iranian nuclear facilities would inescapably entail death of thousands of people due to radioactive fallout. There is no precedent in the history of humankind for bombing an active nuclear reactor. And you cannot halt Iranian nuclear program without destroying, for example, nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

As a matter of fact, the only one state that can overcome most, though not all, of these problems in conducting military operation against Iran is the U.S. Israel, however powerful, does not have full capabilities to pursue such an air campaign without an extraordinarily high risk of failure. But even the U.S. would find it risky. Knowing all

¹¹ To see only one example of military cooperation between Iran and Syria read: "Syria posts Iranian radar atop tall Lebanese peak," July 3, 2010, <http://www.debka.com/article/8890> (accessed July 7, 2010).

¹² See: "Special Report: Iranian Intelligence and Regime Preservation," June 21, 2010, p. 7–8, http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/165348/analysis/20100617_intelligence_services_part_2_iran_and_regime_preservation (accessed June 22, 2010).

that factors, no one should be surprised by words of French president Nicolas Sarkozy, who outright said that any unilateral attack of Israel against Iran would be an absolute catastrophe.¹³ Mohammed el-Baradei from the International Atomic Energy Agency went even further saying that any attack on Iran would be an absolute madness and would turn the Middle East into a gigantic fireball.¹⁴

To sum it all up, on the one hand we have Iran which is very determined to gain nuclear capability almost at all costs, on the other hand there is Israel which is very determined to stop Iran from producing nuclear weapons. And we have Russia that is interested in the price increase of oil and gas and that is interested in making the U.S. bogged down in yet another quagmire in the Middle East. The more Washington is focused on and engaged in the Middle East, the less it has resources and will to defend post-Soviet states against Russian resurgence. And the last months have shown us all how fast and efficiently Russia is regaining its dominant position in the post-Soviet states. Obama is trying to combine all these divergent interests and aims together. Presumably, Obama chose option 2, that is working out a deal with major powers, especially Russia, regarding implementation of new anti-Iranian sanctions at the United Nations Security Council. Previous attempts failed because the U. S. was not willing to give Russia the concessions it demanded – namely recognition of its superiority within the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

Many interesting developments concerning Iranian nuclear issue has been happening these days. On May 2010, Brazil and Turkey stated that they managed to convince Iran to severe concessions. These concessions on the part of Tehran came just days after U.S. officials announced that Washington managed to reach a consensus among major powers (including Russia and China) as to imposing new tougher sanctions on Iran at the United Nations Security Council. This is absolutely no coincidence. In a way Brazil and Turkey that mediated between Tehran and Washington set the Obama administration in an awkward position. The United States had to dismiss the proposal outright. The United Nations Security Council on June 9, 2010 passed a resolution imposing a new set of sanctions against Iran. This new round of sanctions is more painful than the sanctions that had been implemented hitherto. The United Nations among other things banned any sale of major land, air and sea weaponry to Iran.¹⁵ That means that Russia cannot legally deliver batteries of S-300 air defense system to Iran, which is especially acute to Tehran as it strives for acquiring a modern and capable air defense system in order to foil U.S. or Israeli air strike. It made Iranian authorities worried that Moscow is going to turn a blind eye to an U.S./Israeli attack on its nuclear facilities. President Mahmud Ahmadinejad in strident words condemned

¹³ "Sarkozy: Israel strike on Iran would be catastrophe," *Haaretz*, July 9, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/sarkozy-israel-strike-on-iran-would-be-catastrophe-1.279598> (accessed May 26, 2010).

¹⁴ „Atakna Iran? Absolutne Szaleństwo,” May 16, 2009, <http://www.tvn24.pl/12691,1600610,0,1,atak-na-iran-absolutne-szalenstwo,wiadomosc.html> (accessed May 26, 2010).

¹⁵ "Iran: U.N. Approves New Sanctions," June 9, 2010, http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/164559/analysis/20100609_iran_un_approves_new_sanctions (accessed June 13, 2010).

Russia's participation in sanctions. It is also interesting what the White House really promised to the Kremlin for its consent on harsher sanctions.

Another important developments are occurring on a military field. Namely, on May 21 a carrier strike group, with the USS Harry S. Truman carrier, set out from Norfolk in Virginia and headed for the Persian Gulf. Until now, President Barack Obama kept just one aircraft carrier stationed off the coast of Iran. It is the first time, since taking office by Obama 14 months ago, that White House has sent military reinforcements to the Persian Gulf. Some reporters claim that the USS Truman is just the first element in the chain of new buildup of U.S. military assets around Iran. Some journalists claim that Pentagon intends to have even 4-5 carriers in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.¹⁶ If true, it is arguably a display of strength on the part of Washington. Moreover, this summer rumors began to circulate that Israeli military aircraft are being deployed both to Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan. Both Iranian and Israelis sources claimed that Israeli Air Force is deploying its forces in Tabuk Air Force Base in Saudi Arabia.¹⁷ Just a weak earlier British newspaper *The Sunday Times* reported that Riyadh agreed to deactivate its air defense system in strictly determined time in order to enable Israeli aircraft to conduct a bombing raid against Iran.¹⁸ On July 27, 2010 Ahmadinejad said: "We have precise information that the Americans have devised a plot, according to which they seek to launch a psychological war on Iran. They plan to attack at least two countries in the region within the next three months."¹⁹ However, Ahmadinejad did not specify which countries he meant, it is very likely that he meant Iran and Syria. Even Fidel Castro raised this topic in his last speech to nation, warning that U.S. attack on Iran is basically a question of time.²⁰

Of course, we may treat all these worrying news as either rhetoric or disinformation or simply a war of nerves between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the West. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the probability of outbreak of a serious war in the Middle East in the coming 12–24 months with Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the U.S. as main actors of conflict is very high. It seems that Obama took a decision to step up pressure over Iran significantly. Obama alone is under considerable pressure from not

¹⁶ "Obama starts massive US Air-Sea-Marine build-up opposite Iran," May 20, 2010 <http://www.debka.com/article/8794> (accessed May 22, 2010).

¹⁷ See: Jack Khoury, "Report: IAF helicopters unload equipment 'meant for attacking a Muslim state' at Saudi airport," *Haaretz*, June 24, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/report-iaf-helicopters-unload-equipment-meant-for-attacking-a-muslim-state-at-saudi-airport-1.297942>, (accessed July 30, 2010) and "Izrael szykuje się do ataku – już przerzuca broń," June 24, 2004, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,1020223,title,Izrael-szykuje-sie-do-ataku-juz-przerzuca-bron,wid,12408278,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1aa06> (accessed July 30, 2010).

¹⁸ "Hugh Tomlinson, "Saudi Arabia gives Israel clear skies to attack Iranian nuclear sites," *The Sunday Times*, June 12, 2010, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article7148555.ece (accessed July 30, 2010).

¹⁹ "Ahmadinejad: US and Israel plot wars within three months," July 27, 2010, <http://www.debka.com/article/8932> (accessed July 30, 2010).

²⁰ "Atak na Iran jest przesądzony," July 19, 2010, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/2199199,11,item.html>, (accessed July 19, 2010).

only Israel (and pro-Israeli lobby within the U.S.), but also from Arab allies of the U.S., especially Saudi Arabia. Reportedly, king Abdullah brought matters to a head and blatantly warned Obama that if Washington does not employ much firmer means against Iranian nuclear program, Saudi Arabia along with Israel would take the matter into theirs hands.²¹ All these could mean that Tel Aviv and Riyadh are in an concerted effort trying to draw the U.S. in war with Iran. Let us hope that Iranian nuclear program will be resolved peacefully.

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²¹ "Ex-CIA chief Hayden"...